

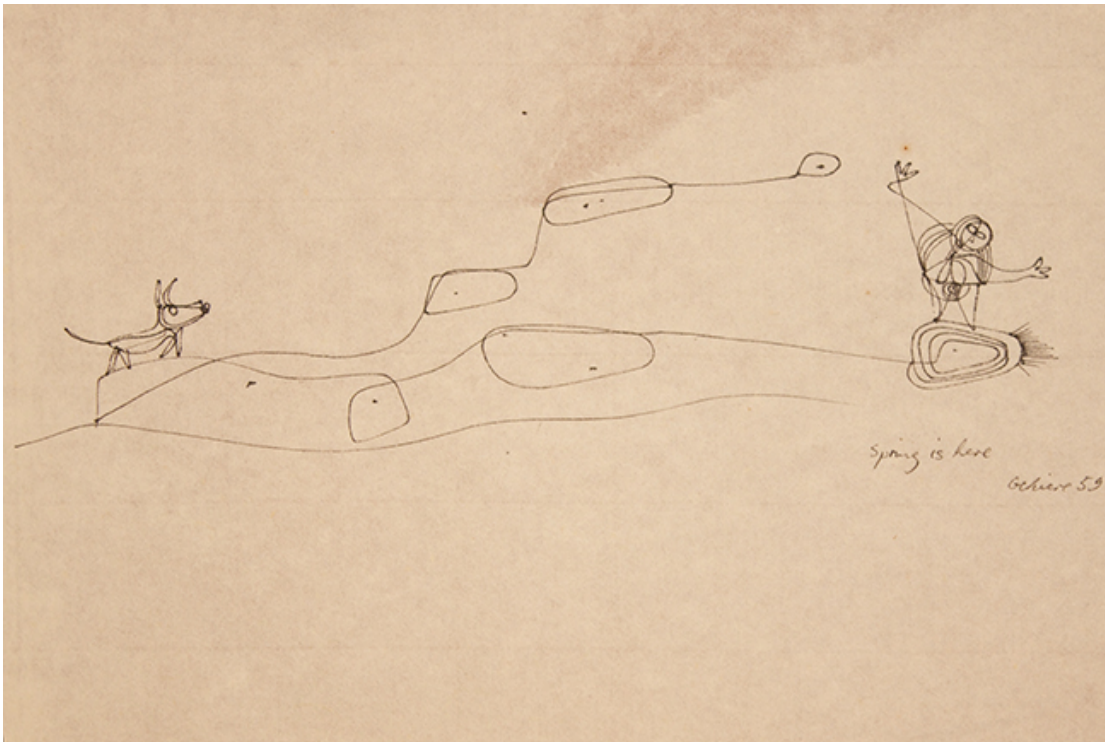
FRED TORRES COLLABORATIONS

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ARTE FUSE

Little Treasures by Madeleine Gekiere

by ARTEFUSE on 2012/11/02 in NEW YORK



In art school, sketchbooks were de rigueur to the discipline and building to create work. They contained “sketches” or doodles of inspiration, scribbled lines of poetry, indecipherable notations that can only be unlocked by the author and secrets within myriads of drawings or written text filling every blank surface. It is said to be the very heart and the diary of an artist. Fred Torres Collaborations showed 20 sketchbooks compiled by the artist, Madeleine Gekiere. The current exhibition has afforded everyone an intimate look into the artistry and life of this gem of an artist.

This is Gekiere’s second solo exhibition and through the opened pages of her sketchbooks compiled all throughout her life than we’re not only seeing the blue print or beginning ideas but finished oeuvres in itself. Every watercolor, ink, collage and notations from the said sketchbooks are glimpses into her fantastical style, witty expression and exuberant spirit. She is still feisty as the contents of her precious sketchbooks. It took a serendipitous encounter to showcase these items as they were originally headed for the garbage heap. Fred Torres met Madeleine as he was moving into the building and got word about an artist who was also a resident. The visit to her apartment and discovering the work prompted Fred Torres to let this artist be represented at his gallery and show her work. Pages from her sketchbooks are projected on the wall. We were treated to the sketches of figures and worlds she composed as minimalist fables.

One of the elements in her work is the penis – which historically in art, is a very powerful and at times controversial element that viewers tend to shy away but it gets a whimsical treatment by Gekiere. It is not attached to a man but becomes part of the landscape. It is rendered like a character with various personalities even though you have them lined up in a row or there's a forest of them. There are human figures with it attached but she manages to integrate them into the composition with such insouciance and gravitas that you can't help but be amused. As each page comes to the flat screen display on the wall, you begin to open your eyes and get that Gekiere is an artist not tethered by convention and plays by her own rules.

As an artist that has gained accolades in book illustration and making short films, the visual is at the core of her artistry. It is unconventional yet full of charm and enough fantasy to keep you interested. That is the real treasure locked in the pages of her sketchbooks – a unique vision that comes along once in a lifetime.

Madeleine Gekiere: A Lifetime of Sketchbooks

On view: October 25, 2012 – January 12, 2013

Gallery Hours: Monday to Saturday (10 am – 6 pm)

Fred Torres Collaborations. 527 W 29th Street, 3rd Floor. New York, NY 10001

Art review by: Oscar A. Laluyan

images from Fred Torres Collaborations courtesy of the artist

Event photos by: Max Noy